IV

Besides Europe, the Empire required attention, and particularly India. MacDonald had visited India in 1911, and written a book about his visit. In the course of this Indian tour he had publicly stated that, given a British Government possessed of sufficient determination and benevolence, the problem of satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Indian National Congress might be solved overnight. This statement was naturally remembered when he became Prime Minister, and though his first short term of office disappointed the Congress leaders, their hopes revived in 1930, especially when the Viceroy, Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax), after a visit to London, made a declaration to the effect that the goal of British policy in India was the realisation there of full Dominion Status.

As in dealing with Europe so in dealing with India, Mac-Donald's first idea was a conference. He announced a Rouiid-Table Conference which should include representatives of every interest concerned from Maharajahs to Untouchables: over which he would wave persuasive arms, to which he would speak persuasive words, thereby lulling divergent views into real or imagined agreement. The Congress leaders announced that they would participate in the proceedings of such a conference only if they were satisfied that the Very simple but vital needs of India' would be met. As these very simple but vital needs included abolition of the salt tax, and the reduction by fifty per cent of the land tax and military expenditure,[16] this was tantamount to refusing to have anything to do with the

Conference. At the Lahore Congress in February 1930, a resolution was passed in favour of *puma swaraj,* or complete independence,[17] a green

[16] A number of financial claims on Great Britain were also formulated, totalling ^546,000,000. They included, among other items, the cost of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

[17] With characteristic subtlety Gandhi later explained that 'complete independence' was an inaccurate translation *of puma swaraj,* which really meant 'disciplined self-rule from within*.